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Roman Catholics Say Schools in Kerala Will Stay Closed

(Bombay) - The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bombay, Valerian Cardinal Gracias, has announced that the managements of Catholic schools in India's Communist state of Kerala have decided not to reopen their classrooms at the end of summer vacation.

The action is in protest against the new Kerala Education Act which among other provisions says that private schools must appoint teachers from a list supplied by the state's Public Service Commission (see EPS Nos. 1 and 17).

Cardinal Gracias said that "the Catholic managements are confident that they can succeed in closing at least 80 per cent of their schools. They have made their decision despite the fact that the government has threatened to take over private schools which do not function - by force, if necessary."

"Where," the cardinal asked, "is the freedom to administer our own schools according to the Indian constitution, if we are not free in the choice of teachers and other important matters?"

Cardinal Gracias also reported that leaders of the Nair tribal community in Kerala have voted against reopening their schools. About 3,000 of the private schools in Kerala are Catholic and another 3,000 are operated by the Nair tribes.
EPS, Geneva

Experiment in Africa, Grubb Tells Mission Society

(London) - A plea for a willingness to experiment in Africa was made to the Church Missionary Society at its annual meeting in London on May 6 by Sir Kenneth Grubb, society president.

The churches of Africa have a "new and special responsibility", he said, pointing out that "the old order changes, yielding place to new.... Now the props

are being knocked away one by one, just so that when the scaffolding has gone, the strength and beauty of the new building may be seen by all. Our African brethren are being called upon by their mere presence and numbers, their fellowship in the Church Universal and their obedience to their Lord, to challenge the nation to seek the good and refuse the evil.... To be known as the salt of society is a high responsibility; it is a test of a church which no longer depends on missionary sub-structure or scaffolding."

Sir Kenneth called for Christian men and women in multi-racial territories to meet together "for prayer, consultation and collective thought and even research into the relation of their faith to the political and economic realities of Africa. If this cannot be done by churchmen, acting as churchmen, what right have we to preach inter-racial harmony to Africa or the world?"

Commenting on the increased emphasis on giving within the church, Sir Kenneth said: "There is a type of churchman, here and there, who, I suspect, secretly regrets that so much money - although little enough in all conscience - goes to missionary societies, since they are a nuisance and 'give the native airs'. There are still such people, I believe, in the Church of England. They are of the sort that in any age and in any weather, however pellucid, see no further than their noses, and those are snub."

The CMS meeting marked the 160th anniversary of the society's founding.

EPS, Geneva

US Catholic, Protestant Cooperation Growing, Jesuit Says

(Chicago) - Cooperation between Roman Catholics and Protestants is one of the most significant church trends in the United States, according to the editor of "America" magazine, national Jesuit weekly.

Father Thurston N. Davis, S.J., speaking in Chicago, said that "today there is a much greater readiness among both Catholics and Protestants to work together toward clearly defined civic and social goals. People of both groups are joining forces as Christians and men of goodwill to attack problems of race, housing, juvenile delinquency, city planning and adult education." But, he emphasized, "part of that understanding is that the faiths are fundamentally different - Protestant is Protestant and Catholic is Catholic. They are not going to merge into some kind of bland and harmless mixture."

"America" is marking its fiftieth anniversary this year.

EPS, Geneva

Bishop Dibelius Addresses British Bible Society

(London) - Considering the enormous pressure of the drive against the Christian faith, it is nothing short of a miracle to see how many people in Eastern Germany are "shunning the enemies of the Cross", Bishop Otto Dibelius, Bishop of Berlin and Brandenburg, said in a speech on May 6 at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London.

The martyrdom which pastors and Christian laymen are suffering is in most cases a quiet one, the bishop said, adding that many Christians have an outlook of patience and serenity which baffles the government authorities.

Bishop Dibelius told the Bible Society that the church in East Germany, even if it is a community suffering untold hardships, is engaged in the open fight that all Christians must wage. "There is no longer a no-man's land of nominal Christians; the line of division is far too sharp to make allowances for any private religiosity."

During the session it was reported that in 1958 the society distributed 7,133,628 copies of the Scriptures. Translations in two new languages - Guerze for French Guinea and Teop for the Solomon Islands - brings the total number of languages in which the society has issued some portion of scripture to 853.

EPS, Geneva

Asian YMCA Leaders Hold Conference

(Gotemba, Japan) - More than a hundred YMCA leaders from 12 countries attended the fifth YMCA leaders' conference last month in Gotemba to discuss work among youth, the young adult programme, relations with other Christian agencies and intermovement aid.

To meet the situation among Asian youth, YMCAs were urged to expand their recreational facilities, to enlarge counselling services and launch constructive programmes of citizenship education. If YMCA work with youths in industry is to be effective, the conference warned, leaders must make greater contact with labour leaders and unions.

Looking at the question of relationships with other Christian groups, the conference affirmed that the YMCA is not a church nor in competition with churches. It maintains an open door to all Christians and to non-Christians. And, the conference said, it accepts as part of its mission the confrontation of non-Christian youth with the Gospel.

In response to a growing demand in Asia, the conference advocated "family membership" and the development of joint activities with the YWCA.

Asian YMCA leaders reported a determination to undertake a greater share of responsibility for extension of the work of the association. EPS, Geneva

Unitarians, Universalists Approve Merger

(Boston) - The Unitarian and Universalist churches in the United States have endorsed a merger "at the earliest feasible date". Results of the voting were announced in Boston last week by Dr. William B. Rice, chairman of a joint merger commission. He said that 600 of a possible 930 churches and fellowships of both denominations had taken part in the voting and 75 per cent favoured merger.

The merger commission will prepare a detailed plan of merger which will be presented in October to a biennial conference of the two groups. There are about 80,000 members of the American Unitarian Association and more than 100,000 members of the Universalist Church of America. Religious education and adult programmes of the two groups are already merged in the Council of Liberal Churches and the two youth departments are united in the Liberal Youth organization.

The two churches are not members of the World Council of Churches.

EPS, Geneva

International Workers in Paris Consider Common Problems

(Villemétrie, France) - Protestant, Anglican and Roman Catholic laymen working in international organizations in Paris held a retreat from May 1 - 3 at Villemétrie, France, to consider their common problems and seek practical solutions.

Chairing the discussions was the Rev. Daniel Jenkins, executive officer of the Christian Frontier Council in the United Kingdom, who told the international civil servants that "you are not as unique as you may think".

"You are concerned with finding a reason for being in a kind of world where all of us increasingly live, but where the rest of us can deceive ourselves more easily that we still live in an older world, that of national traditions and the like," he said. "It is vital that you should retain and replenish your prophetic idealism. And," he added, "for goodness sake let's remember that the Lord expects people with privileges at least to enjoy them and not always to be harping on their difficulties."

Retreat participants said they had two tasks - to make a personal witness to those who worked around them and to place the humanistic ideals of the international organizations in a Christian dimension.

The retreat, the first of its kind, was set up by laymen in the international organizations. Future plans call for monthly meetings and an annual retreat. Theme of this year's retreat was "The Christian Vocation in International Diplomacy". Those taking part included Father Thomas Cowley, O.P., member of the editorial board of the Roman Catholic periodical "Istina", the Rev. Paul Frelick, director of the John Knox House in Geneva, Frère Laurent of the French Protestant community of Taizé, and Pastor André Appel, general secretary of the French Protestant Federation.
EPS, Geneva

World YWCA General Secretary Reports on Madagascar Disaster

(Geneva) - The long-term problem of rebuilding and equipping the thousands of church and school buildings destroyed during the recent floods in Madagascar is one which the church there cannot solve alone, according to Miss Elizabeth Palmer, general secretary of the World YWCA, just back in Geneva from a month's tour in East and Central Africa and Madagascar.

She reported that all the churches in Tananarive, the capital city, which were not destroyed were being used to house refugees and pastors were giving all their time for relief work. A new YWCA building, just completed, housed 165 refugees. "The efforts the Malagasy are making in their own country are magnificent," Miss Palmer said, "but they will need help from abroad for a long time to come".


An appeal to the member churches of the World Council of Churches through its Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, has brought \$42,519 to date for use in Madagascar.
EPS, Geneva

East German Christians Warned Against State Stranglehold

(Bielefeld, Germany) - "Is the position of Christians in Eastern Germany today that of a last desperate effort to throw off the stranglehold of the state?" That is the question raised by Mr. Klaus von Bismarck, director of the office of social affairs, Evangelical Church in Westphalia, in a broadcast last month on the West German radio.

Pointing out that probably many Christians in the German Democratic Republic (DDR) would consider his question as too "heroic", he said that they must realise that the pressure being exerted upon them by atheistic forces is "real and deadly".

"As a result of this pressure," Mr. von Bismarck said, "certain structural changes are already perceptible in the churches. The Protestant church in Eastern Germany is becoming a diaspora-church and because of that is assuming the character of a non-state church." While it is true, he continued, that there are large numbers of strong congregations, especially in rural areas, where attempts to keep youths from being confirmed have been unsuccessful, in industrial towns "very few parents or boys and girls have the courage to attend Confirmation in face of the increased pressure against it". However, he added, an increasing number of people, while not officially church members, do retain a secret connection and pay church taxes.



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"Within the churches," Mr. von Bismarck said, "the trends in the DDR have created certain tensions but the state has not succeeded in destroying the unity of the Protestant church." In his opinion, the few "progressive" pastors have little influence on their congregations. The Association of Protestant Pastors "has only attracted a tiny minority of very naive or politically ambitious pastors, and it has had practically no influence." EPS, Geneva

Swedish Bishops Want to Keep Link with State

(Stockholm) - The Bishops' Conference of the Swedish Church has agreed that while there are differences of opinion between the church and the state, the traditional link should be maintained.

Among other subjects considered at the recent conference, held in Stockholm, was the question of training for the ministry. One of the proposals under consideration, made by Dr. Margit Sahlin, one of the church's well-known women theologians, was to appoint part-time church workers to visit employees in large factories, offices and shops.

The question of admitting women to the ministry, which threatened to split the Swedish Church when it was approved by the church assembly and Parliament, was not discussed at the conference. EPS, Geneva

Church Architects Seek Freedom from Committee Pressures

(Bossey, Switzerland) - An international conference of architects has appealed to the churches to give greater freedom to church designers and to use "properly run architectural competitions" in selecting builders of new churches.

A statement issued at the close of the meeting by the thirty-four participants from eleven countries also advocated community centres, house churches and cooperation with town planners.

Describing the type of architect who should be chosen by the churches, the conference, which was called by the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches in cooperation with the WCC's Information Department, said that "formal membership of the Christian community" and "prior experience with the Church's problems" were not essential tests in appointing architects. "Since the Church must speak to the world as well as to itself", the declaration said, "men who know the world as well as the Church are to be preferred to those who know only the Church."

The conference advocated full mutual briefing between an architect and the church congregation he serves, but said that "good churches are never built by committees". Other parts of the statement deal with the fine arts in church building and the need for educational programmes for architects, clergy and congregations.

The meeting heard addresses from English architect Edward D. Mills, Professor Leonardo Ricci of Italy, G. E. Kidder Smith of the United States, K. L. Sijmons of the Netherlands, Professor Stefan Hirzel of Germany and Mr. Otto Senn of Basel. Other leaders included the Rev. Marvin P. Halverson, executive director of the Department of Worship and the Arts in the National Council of Churches in the USA, the Rev. John Garrett of the WCC's Information Department and Professor H. H. Wolf, director of the Bossey Institute, who was chairman.

The programme included discussions of modern churches shown by colour slides and a photographic exhibit prepared by John P. Taylor of the WCC staff. The conference visited modern churches at Audincourt and Ronchamp, France, and in Basel and Solothurn in Switzerland.

Participants came from Belgium 1, Denmark 1, France 2, Germany 7, Italy 3, Netherlands 4, Norway 1, Sweden 3, Switzerland 2, United Kingdom 5, United States 5. (See also page 7.) EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The English cathedral of Coventry and the Russian cathedral of Stalingrad are exchanging gifts. Coventry is sending a cross made of nails from the part of the cathedral destroyed by bombing in 1940. It has received an ikon with an inscription stressing the unity of all Christians.

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Moscow churches were overflowing on May 3, the Orthodox Easter. Special police had to be assigned to direct traffic in front of the Jelokhovsky cathedral where the main services were conducted by Patriarch Alexius. From 25,000 to 30,000 persons attended Easter services in the Troitsky monastery at Zagorsk, about 50 miles north of Moscow.

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The foundation stone for the largest Protestant church to be built in Vienna since the war, the Church of the Resurrection, was laid on May 3.

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The moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal and in Cape Province, along with other church officials, have conferred with the South African Minister of the Interior about the implementation of the controversial Group Areas Act.

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Three five-day training courses for clergymen in the United Kingdom have been begun by ABC Television to provide a steady stream of ministers with experience in television and a knowledge of its technique. TV officials say that by giving the churches professional advice, the company hopes to improve its religious services and programmes which have been criticized for a lack of skill and imagination.

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Two-hundred religious, labour, business and other leaders from throughout the United States will attend a White House conference on May 21-22 called by President Eisenhower on US participation in World Refugee Year.

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A commemoration week will be held from May 25-31 at Barmen, Germany, marking the first Synod of the German Confessing Church, held there 25 years ago. The synod meeting culminated in the "Declaration of Barmen" which formed the theological basis for the Confessing Church's resistance to national socialism.

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The Anglican Convocations of Canterbury and York have both voted to defer action until their October sessions on a proposal to include in the canons of the Church of England a clause ensuring the secrecy of confessions made to priests. Both convocations reaffirmed confessional secrecy as a doctrinal principle but said they wanted to avoid a possible dispute with parliament on the issue of exempting priests from legal requirements governing testimony in court.

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President Otto Grotewohl of the German Democratic Republic (DDR), has told the national council of the National Front in East Berlin that he "has no desire to enter into competition with Bishop Otto Dibelius in writing open letters". He said he did not intend to reply to the bishop's open letter which took issue with official East German government sponsorship of atheism (see EPS No. 18). The letter was written, President Grotewohl said, "to disturb the conference of foreign ministers at Geneva". At the same time, he denied that pressure was being brought to bear upon Christians in East Germany.

EPS, Geneva

Document

Statement on Architecture and the Church

(Architecture and the Church was the subject of a conference at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches near Geneva, from May 6 to 12. The sessions brought together 28 architects from 11 countries. See page 5. The following is a statement which was received by the conference.)

1. Our twentieth century material and scientific progress and discovery, our new ways of thought and living do not invalidate the ageless message of Christianity. The conditions of life today are calling the Church into the common life of man, away from the enclosed sanctuary, to witness in daily work. This may create new forms of Christian community life which will also lead to expression in buildings which represent, like other buildings of our time, the thinking of modern man. New buildings are often needed to consolidate this evangelistic work and to draw men together in Christian fellowship.
2. In earlier times the church building was one of the finest expressions of the age. This does not solve our problem. We have to face our task in our time to find a new expression of Christian life today through the buildings we make.
3. The serving and not the dominating role of the Church should be kept in mind. This can be expressed, not only in the building, but in the way in which it is related to the town plan. The church building should not be a venture in personal expression, an architectural tour de force, or merely a sensuously satisfying achievement.
4. The Church must take account of the needs of modern society, through the use of community centres, the house church and the chapel in industrial centres.
5. The selection of architects for the church need not be on the basis of formal membership in the Christian community nor prior experience with the Church's problems. Good architecture is the essential; and the best architects are men of imagination, energy and artistic integrity who may be willing to serve the Church as ably as they do other clients. Properly run architectural competitions help the churches in making the right choice. Since the Church must speak to the world as well as to itself, men who know the world as well as the Church are to be preferred to those who know only the Church.
6. A good church building is normally the finished work of a single designer. The congregation has the obligation to brief the architect fully. Throughout the briefing process the Church must leave the designer free to speak his mind and do his work. Good churches are never built by committees. Let the architect be the architect.
7. The architect should understand his client's need in all its aspects and endeavour to fulfil that need through the medium of the architecture he produces.
8. A dialogue must continue between Church and architect, and in this dialogue the Church should not insist on the right to make artistic decisions. The architect for his part must endeavour to serve the purpose of the Church.
9. The substance of this conversation is the work and life of the Church as a community with a mission and a living message for the modern world.

10. The place of worship should help the congregation to act corporately in the praise and service of God. Design must avoid distraction so as to focus the attention of all the worshippers on the worship and its expression through acts and symbols in the building. The fixing of the mind upon God is corporate and active. Scientific, theological and architectural studies of this problem should be conducted by the churches through bringing specialists together within the growing agreement on the nature of worship in the ecumenical movement.
11. Fine art in the Church should not be understood as something additional or merely decorative, but as an organic part of the architecture arising from the work and worship of the church. The church must not be a museum of fine art or of archaeological relics. The highest standard of industrial design achieved in everyday life should be applied to the furnishings of the church, including all the minor arts such as printing, posters and fabrics.
12. Church authorities, theological students, building committees and congregations need to be educated in the meaning of contemporary architecture by literature, exhibitions, filmstrips and other means. Similarly, the churches must educate their architects.
13. The churches pray for the unity of the Church; let us work for it. If we prune away the habits and patterns which represent unessential differences between the churches, if we provide buildings which meet the purposes of the Christian community in today's world, we may find that in tomorrow's world we will indeed be a truer Christian community, broad enough to encompass the differences which should and will remain.

EPS, Geneva

